

# Return to Practice Guidance for CTCMPAO Members

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College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario

Ordre des praticiens en médecine traditionnelle chinoise et des acupuncteurs de l'Ontario

**Return to Practice Guidance during the COVID-19 Pandemic (When Authorized by the Ontario Government). Review and comply with all government directives and orders to minimize the spread of infection. Review of this document is on going and will be amended as necessary.**



## KEY POINTS

- Apply effective infection prevention and control (IPAC) consistently to ensure the delivery of safe care.
- Follow the directives and guidance from the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and other authoritative bodies regarding practices during COVID-19.
- Use appropriate clinical judgment and follow the Standards of Practice of the profession.
- Provide TCM and acupuncture services only when the anticipated benefits of treatment clearly outweigh the risks to the patient and the practitioner.



## 1 Considerations for Reopening Clinics

### Infection and Prevention Control Strategy and Ensuring Clinic Safety

Conduct a thorough assessment of your practice and review infection protocols to ensure that your clinic is adequately prepared to return to work safely.

- **Use Hand Hygiene.** This is recognized as the most important infection control and prevention measure.
  - Wash (or sanitize) your hands thoroughly between patients.
  - Encourage patients to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after appointments.
  - Wearing gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.
- **Follow proper respiratory etiquette**
- **Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
  - NOTE: TCM and acupuncture services are not recommended if sufficient supply of PPE is unavailable.
  - Ensure that you and your staff understand the safe use, care, and limitations of PPE.
  - **Follow the recommended steps for putting on and taking off PPE.**
  - Wear a surgical mask during treatments and whenever within two meters of the patient.
  - If gloves are used, change and dispose of them between each patient.
  - **Visit the PPE Supplier Directory** if you are looking to increase your supply of PPE.
- **Cleaning and Disinfecting**
  - Establish an appropriate cleaning and disinfecting schedule.
  - Ensure that clinical contact surfaces are cleaned and disinfected after each patient visit.
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces often throughout the day and when visibly dirty.

### Isolation Protocol for Practitioners and Staff

- Do not return to your work if you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- If you or a staff member screens positive, inform the supervisor immediately, if applicable.
- Self-isolate and contact your primary care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) for further direction on clinical assessment.
- Refer to the Public Health Ontario factsheets on how to **self-monitor** and **self-isolate** for more information.



## 2 Pre-Appointment Protocol

Implement and document Active and Passive screening before any in-person interactions (with patients or staff). For the most up to date list of symptoms, [please see here](#).

### Active Screening

- Conduct screening over the phone before scheduling appointments, when possible, and upon entry to the clinic.

### Passive Screening

- Display signage at points of entry of the clinic and at reception. Communicate similar messaging on voicemails and websites.

If a patient or patient companion answers **YES** to any of the questions in the [Patient Screening Guidance Document](#),

- Advise them to complete the online self-assessment tool before calling their primary care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) for further clinical assessment.
- Contact their local public health unit to report a person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.
- **Do not provide in-person clinical services to individuals with signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19.**

### Scheduling

- Stagger patient appointments to minimize patient contact in the waiting room. Try to leave at least 30 minutes between each appointment.
- If possible, ask patients to limit necessary companions to only one person per appointment.
- Display signage for potential walk-in patients to phone in first, prior to entering the clinic.

### Physical Distancing

- When possible, remain two meters away from team members, staff, patients, and other individuals when within the clinic.



## 3 Resuming Clinical Activities

### During Consultation or Treatment Procedures

- Wash or sanitize hands before treatment.
- Ensure that practitioners and staff have the proper PPE.
- Implement physical distancing between staff.
- Ask patients to wash or sanitize hands upon arrival.
- Open windows for air ventilation where possible.
- Encourage use of facemasks for all patients.

### After Consultation or Treatment Procedures

- Ask patients to wash or sanitize hands after the appointment.
- Change your surgical/procedure mask if possible.
- If gloves are used, change and dispose of them between each patient.
- Change your protective clothing, or lab coat, as required, especially if they have come into contact with biological fluids or if contact is suspected.
- Clean safety glasses and prescription glasses, if you use them.
- Follow the procedures for removing PPE.
- Ensure that the instruments in the consultation room are cleaned with a surface disinfectant before and after each consultation.